

# The European Internationalist: Sweden and European Security Cooperation

Lisbeth Aggestam

*Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge*

## Resumo

*A Suécia e a Cooperação Europeia de Segurança: O Internacionalista Europeu*

A política de segurança e defesa sueca mudou radicalmente desde o fim da Guerra Fria. A neutralidade foi abandonada, sendo o não-alinhamento significativo na forma como salvaguarda a independência relativamente a quaisquer compromissos de aliança militar. A Suécia tem apoiado o desenvolvimento de uma Política Europeia de Segurança e Defesa (PESD), sendo um parceiro activo na arquitectura de cooperação da NATO. Estas iniciativas teriam sido impensáveis durante a Guerra Fria. No entanto, este artigo suporta a ideia de que as mudanças da política sueca de segurança e defesa são enquadradas por uma tradição de política externa de alcance mundial de feitura do bem, que precede o fim da Guerra Fria e que se enquadra numa concepção de internacionalismo moral. O envolvimento sueco nas operações da PESD e NATO é visto como servindo um conceito alargado de segurança. Assim se explica como é que a Suécia se envolveu tão empenhadamente na cooperação com a UE e com a NATO, e se justifica uma reduzida polémica no debate político interno relativamente às mudanças sobre a política sueca de segurança e defesa.

## Abstract

Swedish security and defence policy has changed radically since the end of the Cold War. Swedish neutrality has been abandoned and non-alignment is only relevant in terms of standing free of any military alliance commitments. Sweden is a staunch supporter of the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) of the European Union and a keen partner within the NATO framework of cooperation. These policies would have been unthinkable during the Cold War. Yet, this article suggests that these profound changes to Swedish security and defence policy have been framed within a Swedish foreign policy tradition of 'doing good' in the world that predates the end of the Cold War; a role conception of moralistic internationalism. Swedish involvement within the ESDP and NATO-operations is thus seen to be serving Swedish broader concepts of security. This explains why Sweden has so rapidly come to embrace EU and NATO co-operation and why the subsequent changes to Swedish security and defence policy have stirred so little controversy in the domestic political debate.

## Introduction

Sweden is not part of any military alliance. The future security of our country is based on community and cooperation with other countries (Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, 2007).

Swedish security and defence policy has changed tremendously since the end of the Cold War. Non-alignment is significant only in the sense that Sweden stands free of formal military defence commitments. In all other matters, the emphasis is on Swedish involvement and cooperation based on a broad concept of security. Sweden is a keen supporter of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) of the European Union (EU). It embraces a closer partnership with NATO in non-article five areas. Within the Nordic framework, Sweden seeks a new dynamics of cooperation as a bridge between European and transatlantic security policies. This type of cooperation would have been unthinkable during the Cold War, when Sweden avoided entanglements in security and defence that could have been seen to compromise its policy of non-alignment and its ambition to stand neutral in the event of war.

Yet, underneath these torrents of change, there are still elements of continuity that provide a framework in which these new changes in security and defence policy take place. A key argument of this article is that an important reason why the changes in Swedish security and defence policy since the end of the Cold War have not been more controversial and contested is that they are justified with reference to Swedish traditions of 'doing good' in the world (Bergman 2004, Strömviik 2006), and to a broader concept of security. These traditions in the security and defence field originally developed during the Cold War but continue to serve as a broad conceptual framework to legitimise changes in Swedish security and defence policy.

The admixture of continuity and change in Swedish security and defence policy is analysed in five parts of this article. The first part provides a brief historical background to Swedish traditions in security and defence policy. The second part examines shifts in Swedish concepts of security that privilege a broader interpretation. The third part considers why Sweden, a country that is not renowned for being a Euro-enthusiast in other areas, is such a keen supporter of the ESDP. This backing of the ESDP, however, is not at the expense of other forms of security cooperation. In part four, it is argued that Swedish security and defence policy is characterised by a functional approach to cooperation

which means that Sweden seeks close collaboration also with the Nordic countries and NATO. The final part considers the domestic context which continues to be a constraining factor to changes in Swedish security and defence policy.

### **Traditions in Swedish security policy**

Neutrality is not mentioned today as a principle or doctrine of Swedish security policy. Yet, to understand the distinctiveness and particular interpretation of military non-alignment that still constitute a guide to Swedish security policy, it is important to draw attention to the historical roots and traditions of this policy.

The first thing to note is that Swedish neutrality was never based on a legal treaty or document, but rather a declared ambition to be non-aligned in peace and neutral in the event of war. This meant that Swedish neutrality was self-imposed and as such needed to be interpreted and continuously re-stated to be credible. For many years, this policy was widely seen to have served Swedish interests well, even if it later transpired that cooperation with Western powers was secretly pursued within a small elite circle of the Swedish government at the time.

During the Cold War, Swedish foreign and security policy was influenced by two traditions: small state realism and liberal internationalism (Aggestam 2001: 183). Small state realism was expressed through a preoccupation with 'national survival' and thus closely linked to concepts of sovereignty. A credible policy of neutrality was to be maintained through a strong and self-reliant territorial army (based on conscription) and an independent arms industry. In peacetime, Swedish non-alignment was seen to contribute to stability and confidence-building between the blocs in the strategically sensitive northern flank of Europe. Swedish foreign and security policy aimed therefore to stay clear of any formal commitments and alignments that could compromise Swedish independence and freedom of action within Europe itself. This certainly excluded Swedish membership of NATO, but it also foreclosed full membership of the European Community (as it was then called). Instead, Swedish security cooperation was predominantly promoted within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

However, neutrality was not seen to preclude the pursuit of an active foreign policy with strong tenets of liberal internationalism, particularly through the United Nations. In contrast to some other neutral states, like Switzerland, membership of the UN ranked higher than concerns for a strict interpretation of neutrality. Indeed, Swedish non-alignment

within the context of the UN was seen to provide Sweden with a distinct position to pursue a progressive foreign policy beyond the strictures of Cold War politics that built on ideas of 'common security' and a more extended concept of duties beyond national borders. This entailed a commitment to international development, confidence-building, disarmament, and peacekeeping operations. To this day, the United Nations enjoys wide-ranging support from Swedish political parties and the domestic population alike, and may explain why the transference of peacekeeping and support operations to the European Union and NATO, have been relatively uncontroversial (Herolf 2007: 50).

### Concepts of security

The two traditions of state realism and liberal internationalism have in turn informed Swedish concepts of security. In a narrow definition, security refers to national defence and military non-alignment. The broader notion relates to aspects of international security that do not involve territorial defence, such as peacekeeping, foreign aid, and global disarmament (Aggestam 2001: 191). What has happened since the end of the Cold War is that the narrow concept of security associated with territorial defence has gradually given way to a broader conception of security to meet a wider spectrum of threats now conceived. As Pernille Rieker (2003: 124) argues, 'Swedish security identity has changed from being characterised by neutrality and territorial defence, to increased Europeanism and international crisis management'. A conflation of Swedish security interests with broader questions of international peace and security has taken place. Rather than a narrow territorial conception of threat, the Swedish government subscribes to the threats outlined in the European Security Strategy, such as regional instability, state failure, organised crime, international terrorism and WMD proliferation.

A major reason for this conceptual shift is that no major, or imminent military threat to Sweden is identified. Hence, the Swedish armed forces have over the last decade been undergoing a fundamental transformation, moving steadily away from a territorial defence structure towards one that is flexible and increasingly focused on participating in international crisis management operations. This was clearly outlined in the government bill 'Our future defence', where a conflation between Swedish security and efforts to strengthen international peace and security was made.<sup>1</sup> The new post-cold war threats are

---

1 'Vårt framtida försvar', Proposition 2004/05: 5, Stockholm: Swedish Ministry for Defence.

seen to affect Sweden more indirectly given that few of them are in Sweden's immediate geographical vicinity. War and conflict in the former Yugoslavia have been indicative of the kind of threat Sweden now identifies, which even if limited in geographical scope, was had repercussions throughout Europe. Sweden has contributed with troops throughout the conflicts on the Balkan, both under UN flag, NATO-command and more recently under the banner of the EU. The violent disintegration of Yugoslavia also affected Sweden profoundly in terms of the large number of refugees that came to Sweden. Similarly, on a more global scale, the war in Iraq, against which Sweden stood at the time, has deeply affected Sweden, in the sense that approximately half the refugees arriving in Europe chose to seek asylum in Sweden.<sup>2</sup>

Swedish concepts of security are therefore informed by what happens in the world globally rather than focusing exclusively on its regional vicinity. It also signifies a more extended notion of security to include the security of 'others', that is, people outside of the national perimeters of Sweden. However, it should be noted that this mission of 'doing good' in the world is not simply altruistic, but serves to address Swedish security concerns as well, as the examples of Yugoslavia and Iraq above illustrate.

Swedish defence efforts are thus increasingly focused on international crisis management. To this end, Sweden has developed a Rapid Reaction Unit, become the lead nation in the Nordic Battlegroup for rapid EU interventions, and is currently involved in NATO-led operations in Afghanistan (ISAF) and Kosovo (KFOR). Sweden is also in the process of preparing to send over 200 soldiers on an ESDP-mission to Chad. The intention is that these kind of operations should increase in the future (Tolgfors 2007). Again, while these missions are justified in terms of working towards defending peace, security and development, there are also instrumental reasons accompanying these changes to Swedish security and defence policy, namely the influence that Sweden thinks it gains by being active and involved in these international structures of security cooperation. For as the Swedish Minister for Defence, Sten Tolgfors (2007), clearly states, 'We also gain influence in international organisations and in conflict resolution. Our participation strengthens Sweden's voice abroad'. This underlying reason is an important consideration for why Sweden is such a staunch supporter of the development of the European Security and Defence Policy of the European Union.

---

2 The reason for this is that Sweden has relatively liberal asylum laws, but large numbers were also drawn to Sweden because of the already substantial number of Iraqis living there. See further, Tobias Billström, Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, and Cecilia Malmström, Minister for EU Affairs. 'Iraqis taking refuge in Sweden,' *International Herald Tribune*, 13-14 January 2007.

### **The European Union: a 'force for good' in the world**

A vital task for Sweden today is to contribute to even stronger European cooperation, making the Union the force in the service of peace, freedom and reconciliation that the world more and more obviously needs. We therefore want Sweden to be at the heart of the European cooperation. This is why cooperation within the European Union has a special status in Swedish foreign and security policy. (Carl Bildt, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, 2007).

The transformation of the European security order and the evolving process of European integration has presented Sweden with opportunities to become involved in an unprecedented way with its European neighbours after the end of the Cold War. References to a European identity and responsibilities have become frequent markers in Swedish foreign policy speeches and symbolize the ambition that Swedish governments have had in carving out an active new role for Sweden in the evolving security structures emerging in post-cold war Europe. What is interesting to observe is how the transformation of Swedish security policy has taken place hand in hand with a growing recognition of the European Union as an important security actor in its own right, both processes being justified on the grounds of 'doing good' and building peace in the world (cf. Bildt 2007, Solana 2007).

Yet, given that Sweden still retains its policy of military non-alignment, it is not in favour of any European defence system that would involve mutual defence guarantees, nor does Sweden want to see moves towards a more militarised EU. Since becoming an EU member in 1995, Sweden has, however, made a great effort to emphasise that membership means that Sweden is part of a political alliance. As such, it would be difficult for Sweden to remain indifferent if one of the EU members was under threat and attacked. Thus, it is important to underline that Sweden perceives a moral obligation to aid another member if attacked (and this is largely a bipartisan issue among the major political parties in Sweden), while eschewing official guarantees to that effect. It could also be argued that this distinction has become increasingly blurred after the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, after which EU member states were quick to sign up to a common declaration of solidarity. Nonetheless, Sweden remains wary of discussions in

the EU that may imply an increased militarization or any suggestions towards developing common European defence structures. This demonstrates the continued hold that non-alignment continues to have on Swedish security policy. It also explains why Sweden has sought a distinctive approach to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the subsequent development of the ESDP.

Right from the start of its membership of the European Union, Sweden focused its efforts to shape the CFSP, and later on the ESDP, to reflect its own distinct ideas about European cooperation in this area. During the Intergovernmental Conference 1996/7, Sweden made a number of proposals to strengthen the effectiveness of the CFSP. Particularly important was a joint Swedish-Finnish paper, first published in April 1996, suggesting that a more formal link between the Western European Union (WEU) and the EU should be established to improve the CFSP's capacity in crisis management. This specifically concerned the so-called Petersberg tasks of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.<sup>3</sup> In the Amsterdam Treaty, the WEU merged with the EU while the mutual defence guarantees in the original WEU-treaty were left outside. This was not only seen as a success in expanding the security role of the European Union, but for Sweden it was also an important outcome in terms of influence. Sweden had previously only held an observer status within the WEU which meant limited influence in terms of decisions and implementation. With these decisions now taken within the EU, Sweden would become more influential in the policy-making process.

Another area where Sweden has made its mark is in civilian crisis management. While fully supporting the initial Anglo-French agreement of 1998 to develop a European Security and Defence Policy, there was also concern in Sweden that the genesis of the ESDP was focused predominantly on military crisis management. The Swedish government was therefore keen to see the EU develop the civilian aspects of crisis management. At the European Council in Feira 2000, it was decided that the EU should develop civilian capabilities regarding policing, the rule of law, civilian administration, and civil protection within the ESDP-framework. During the Swedish EU Presidency of 2001, the Swedish government successfully brought the concept of conflict prevention onto the EU agenda and thus anchored a more comprehensive concept of security within the EU.

But it would be wrong to overemphasise the Swedish desire to develop the civilian dimension of the ESDP at the exclusion of everything else. Sweden promotes a comprehensive approach to security in the EU and that also involves a recognition of the

---

3 Lena Hjelm-Wallén and Tarja Halonen, *Dagens Nyheter*, 21 April 1996.

need for a military capability to back up EU policies (Tolgfors 2007). Hence, Sweden readily made contributions to the initial EU Headline Goal of 1999, and more recently, to the Headline Goal of 2010, to which Sweden provides the major share of a Nordic Battlegroup to be operative in the first half of 2008.<sup>4</sup> Sweden has contributed to all ESDP missions so far. It is also noteworthy that Sweden contributed with special forces alongside the French in the only peace enforcement operation the EU has undertaken so far, that is, the Artemis operation in Congo 2003. Indeed, a major reason for Swedish support of the ESDP, be it in civilian or military crisis management, is the contribution it can make to the UN. Support for UN crisis management is seen as one of the most important tasks of the ESDP. This explains why the Swedish government feels a strong imperative to contribute troops to such ESDP-missions as we are currently seeing assembled to be sent to Darfur and Chad (EUFOR Chad/FCA).

The strength of Sweden's commitment to ESDP does not however take place at the expense of cooperation with other security organisations. Indeed, as we will be discussing below, the continued role that non-alignment still plays in Swedish security policy tends to encourage a more functional approach to security cooperation. Rather than an ideological preference for particular institutions, it is the task at hand that determines the framework of cooperation.

### **Functional cooperation**

Given that Sweden is militarily non-aligned, different institutions for security cooperation tend to be seen as mutually reinforcing and overlapping rather than in terms of institutional rivalry. This is also reflected in the stance taken to the transformation of the Swedish armed forces with the emphasis on flexibility and the ability to work within different organisations. Apart from the EU, foremost among these frameworks of cooperation are the Nordic countries and NATO.

#### *Nordic cooperation*

Despite being similar in many ways, not least in terms of political culture, the Nordic countries have traditionally chosen their own distinctive paths when it comes to security.

---

4 For details on the Nordic Battlegroup, see Andersson (2006).



Only Sweden and Finland actively participate in the ESDP. Denmark has opted out of EU military cooperation but is a NATO-member along with Norway, who in turn is not a member of the EU. The end of the Cold War seems, however, to have instigated a new dynamics of cooperation between the Nordic countries, both within the framework of the Nordic Council and bilaterally. 'There is a strong mutual political will to look for new forms of cooperation and common solutions within new areas' as the Swedish Minister for Defence (Tolgfors 2007) observes. With the decline in focus on the narrow territorial conception of security, the security concerns they share on the international level have come to the forefront. The Nordic countries share a similar outlook on issues like the support for international law, the UN system, international poverty reduction and development, human rights and international peacekeeping.

This cooperation takes place on different levels. Firstly, the Nordic Council now includes security and defence cooperation and has been extended to include the three Baltic states on a number of issues. Particularly in the early days of Baltic states' independence, the Nordic countries helped them build up their military capabilities. Secondly, the Nordic countries have increasingly worked together on different crisis management and peace operations, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. More lately, they have formed the Nordic Battlegroup for EU-led international crisis management missions. Sweden contributes by far the largest share with over 2,000 troops. Other contributing countries are Finland, Norway, Estonia and also more recently Ireland. Thirdly, bilateral cooperation and initiatives have also become more frequent between different Nordic countries. Within the EU, it is natural for Sweden to join up with Finland on different initiatives. Bilateral cooperation between Sweden and Norway are also becoming closer. Indeed, the Defence chiefs in Norway and Sweden suggested recently to their respective governments that Sweden and Norway should develop what they call a new 'military cooperation axis', urging their governments to leave old hang-ups about sovereignty behind and seek new forms of cooperation, not least in the field of new defence material.<sup>5</sup>

What is interesting to note is that at a time when relations between the European Union and NATO are plagued by difficulties, the Nordic countries, given their mix of membership with NATO and the EU, are seen as potentially 'instrumental in bridging the gap between EU and NATO' (Tolgfors 2007). This is why the call for intensified Nordic

---

5 'Nytt försvarssamarbete mellan Sverige och Norge', Sverre Diesen and Håkan Syrén, *Dagens Nyheter* 31 August 2007.

cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic context is increasingly made. Again, the Nordic Battlegroup (NBG) is seen as an important precedent in this regard. As Tolgfors (2007) claims, '[t]he NBG illustrates how the division between members and non-members of EU and NATO is becoming less obvious in ongoing international cooperation and operations'.

### *Transatlantic cooperation*

A key symbol of Sweden's continued military non-alignment remains non-membership of NATO. However, throughout the post-cold war period, a gradual re-evaluation of NATO has been underway, bringing Sweden much closer to NATO. NATO's growing political role and involvement in crisis management and security cooperation in non-article five areas have opened up space for Swedish partnership with NATO in a range of activities. NATO has become a close partner through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) framework. Tellingly, it is with NATO rather than the EU that Sweden so far has contributed most troops in international operations. As of September 2007, Sweden is involved under NATO-command in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan with a troop of around 330 and in Kosovo Force (KFOR) with 385 soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

Swedish participation in the PfP programme means that Sweden has initiated a formalized link with NATO, something that would have been hard to imagine during the cold war. PfP involves no security guarantees or commitments, but in the event of military attack political consultation may be sought. PfP provides a useful forum of contacts and consultation, primarily regarding peacekeeping operations, but also in other areas such as civil preparedness.

Rather than focusing on the membership question, the most interesting analytical level to study Sweden's adaptation to NATO is the operational level. Arguably, a key to the internationalisation of the Swedish armed forces is interoperability, which in practice means an adaptation to NATO standards of operating procedures to facilitate multinational efforts in peacekeeping missions. Sweden is continuously involved in major PfP exercises which encourage a deeper standardisation of the Swedish armed forces to NATO.

The Centre-right government of Reinfeldt contains two parties in the coalition that favours NATO-membership. The question of membership is however not on the Swedish

---

<sup>6</sup> See [www.mil.se/int](http://www.mil.se/int).

agenda at the moment. A major reason for this is the consistent evidence in public opinion surveys that this would have no clear support among the broader public in Sweden. The present Swedish government has nonetheless made much more of Sweden's involvement with NATO and accused its predecessors of *Berührungsangst*.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the absence of NATO-membership, Sweden is in fact a strong supporter of transatlantic relations and close relations with the United States (Tolgfors 2007). Swedish support of the EU's ESDP does not mean that Sweden subscribes to the French view of Europe as a counterbalance to the US in a multipolar world. Rather, in many respects Sweden is closer to the UK in emphasising the complementarity of EU-NATO relations. As a small state, there are also considerable lingering feelings that it is in Swedish interests to see a continued American military presence in Europe as an ultimate guarantee for stability in the North of Europe.

### **The domestic context**

Similarly to many other countries, Swedish security and defence policy is largely characterised by a bipartisan approach. In Sweden, this has also deep roots in political culture given that unity on the principle of non-alignment and neutrality was seen as an important element for the policy to be credible. Yet, underneath this consensual approach there are growing divisions that are becoming more visible and politicised.

The current government with Fredrik Reinfeldt as Prime Minister speaks with greater emphasis about the significance of Sweden's involvement in the European Security and Defence Policy and Sweden's relations with NATO, in comparison with the previous Social Democratic government. This has so far been more noticeable in terms of style than policy. Yet, it has stirred enough unease among the opposition parties for them to call for new cross-party talks on defence policy.<sup>8</sup> Two of the parties in the coalition government are in favour of NATO-membership and Sweden's diplomatic representation at NATO-Headquarters in Brussels has recently been substantially upgraded.<sup>9</sup> The latest round of cuts in the Swedish defence budget have also raised questions about the underlying logic informing Swedish defence policy.

---

7 Gunilla Herolf, 'A new policy for Sweden?', Europe's World, [www.europesworld.org/](http://www.europesworld.org/)

8 *Svenska Dagbladet* 16 September 2007, 'Sahlin kräver försvarsöverläggningar'.

9 *Dagens Nyheter* 19 December 2007, 'Nato graderas upp i UD:s struktur'.

Swedish involvement in international peace operations enjoys widespread support among the Swedish public as it is seen as part of a long-standing tradition of Swedish peacekeeping activities. Swedish cooperation with the EU and NATO is thus seen as a continuation of this policy and hence enjoys support as long as operations are mandated by the UN or the OSCE. However, there is little discussion and debate more generally about the transformation that this involvement entails for Swedish defence policy in the long run, neither is there much coverage in the news about Swedish forces being sent under EU-flag to Africa or under NATO-command to Afghanistan. As Pernille Rieker (2003: 124) notes, 'there has been an important difference between the Swedish discourse at home, and that expressed on the international level. While Sweden presented a rather progressive line of security thinking in various international frameworks, at home the security discourse remained far more traditional and military-focused'.

There are, however, certain risks in not having a more profound debate about the transformation of Swedish security and defence policy after the end of the cold war. Firstly, if an international operation goes badly wrong and soldiers die, issues about Swedish involvement in these kind of missions may suddenly become more politicised and questioned due to a lack of knowledge. Close partnership with a military alliance could bring a non-aligned state, such as Sweden, into politically sensitive situations as the definition of 'peacekeeping activities' may not always be clear-cut. Secondly, whilst Swedish security and defence policy has been transformed since the end of the Cold War, these changes have taken place gradually without clear political leadership providing a sense of direction. There is still considerable support for Swedish non-alignment among the Swedish public and without leadership for change, this makes it unlikely that, for instance, membership of NATO would become a serious option in the near future. In any case, it would require a general referendum preceding it (Herolf 2007: 48). The United Nations is still seen as the only international organization that provides international legitimacy for the use of force.

### **Concluding remarks: Europeanisation and small states**

The study of change in the security policy of small states tends to focus on the processes of adaptation that have taken place since the end of the cold war to the new realities of international order and emergent structures of security cooperation.

To be sure, EU membership has in the case of Sweden spurred several changes and adaptations at the domestic level. Yet, it has been argued in this article that Sweden has also been able to shape security policy in the European Union in a way that reflects Swedish preferences and concepts of security. The merger of the WEU with the EU at the end of the 1990s, and the development of civilian crisis management and conflict prevention as part of the ESDP-policy have been important Swedish initiatives to shape the emergent security structures within the EU. Europeanisation of Swedish security policy should therefore not be seen simply in terms of adaptation, but crucially the success with which Sweden has been able to shape this structure of cooperation in the first place. However, whilst this point about the co-constitutive nature of Europeanisation is much less controversial to make in terms of the bigger member states of the Union, particularly with reference to the EU-3 (Aggestam 2006), it is rarely made with reference to small states. The fact that Sweden as a small state has been able to exercise a decisive role within the ESDP – arguably punching above its weight as a non-aligned state – should encourage us to explore further the different dynamics of security cooperation within the European Union.

For Sweden, the perception of being able to have an influence within the CFSP and ESDP has largely been a positive experience which explains the continued enthusiasm that this area of European integration enjoys among policy-makers. However, this support is conditioned on the way the ESDP develops in the future. The French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, has already signalled ahead of the French Presidency of the EU that he would like to beef up the military dimension of the EU. While the Swedish government clearly recognizes, and indeed endorses the fact that the EU needs to have the ability to use military force as a last resort, there is still a strong preference for non-military instruments to be used and that all operations on military issues operate under UN cover. Movements towards more structured defence cooperation within the EU would be likely to compromise Swedish enthusiasm for the ESDP as long as the policy of non-alignment continues.

At the same time, Sweden has become deeply enmeshed in the EU and it would be hard to envisage a situation in which Sweden would seek to stand neutral in the event of an armed attack on another EU country. While Sweden is a country that naturally favours intergovernmental procedures of cooperation, another legacy of non-alignment, there are also fears that since the failure of the European Constitution, EU policy is increasingly becoming re-nationalised with a more distinct dominance

of the larger states in the process, as in recent initiatives by the EU-3. The Swedish government's favourable stance towards an increase in majority voting and a strengthened position for the High Representative of the CFSP and ESDP should be seen in this light. Significantly, the Swedish government also favours a common military planning headquarter in Brussels in favour of the five existing national headquarters. It remains to be seen what, if any, initiatives the Swedish government will promote for European security cooperation during its Presidency of the European Union in the latter half of 2009.

## References

Aggestam, Lisbeth, (2001), 'An end to neutrality? Continuity and change in Swedish foreign policy', in R. Niblett and W. Wallace, eds., *Rethinking European order: West European responses, 1989-97*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Aggestam, Lisbeth (2006), 'What role for the EU in security and defence? British, French and German views of the ESDP', *SIIA Papers*, No 1.

Andersson, Jan Joel, (2006), 'Armed and Ready? The EU Battlegroup Concept and the Nordic Battlegroup', Stockholm: Sieps, No 2.

Bergman, Annika (2004), 'The Nordic Militaries-Forces For Good?', in L. Elliot & G. Cheesman, eds., *Forces for Good? Cosmopolitan Militaries in the 21st Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bildt, Carl (2007), Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, 14 February.

Herolf, Gunilla (2007), 'Overcoming National Impediments to ESDP', in K. Brummer, ed., *The North and the ESDP: The Baltic States, Denmark, Finland and Sweden*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Rieker, Pernille (2003), *Europeanisation of Nordic security: the EU and the changing security identities of the Nordic states*, Department of Political Science, PhD dissertation, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo.

Solana, Javier, (2007), 'Countering globalisation's dark side', *Europe's World*, Policy Dossier, Autumn 2007.

Strömvik, Maria (2006), 'Starting to "think big": the Nordic countries and EU peace-building', in Alyson J. K. Bailes, Gunilla Herolf and Bengt Sundelius (eds), *The Nordic Countries and the European Security and Defence Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tolgfors, Sten, (2007), 'Enhanced Nordic cooperation in a Euro-Atlantic context', Speech at the Swedish Atlantic Council conference, Stockholm, 9 November 2007.